

## ORGANIC WATCH ALERT!

### Worksheet for Comments on USDA's Proposed Rules for Implementing the Organic Foods Production Act

#### INTRODUCTION

The last five years have seen an explosion of public interest in organic foods. The market for these foods has tripled since 1990. Now, more than 2 million U.S. families choose to buy organic. This large scale consumer acceptance of organic food represents one of the most significant contributions to human health, environmental protection and animal welfare in our times.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) is now attempting to redefine organic foods in a manner which could fatally undermine consumer confidence in the organic label. On December 17, 1997, the USDA announced proposed national organic standards that could potentially allow for the use of genetic engineering, irradiation, factory farming, municipal sludge, and certain synthetic pesticides in organic production. These proposed government standards go directly against the recommendations of the National Organic Standards Board (**NOSB**). Created by the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) of 1990, the National Organic Standards Board (**NOSB**) is a national citizens board composed of farmers, consumers, processors, environmentalists and scientists. The 1990 law gave the NOSB the authority to prepare recommendations for a national organic standard. Since its appointment in 1992, the NOSB has held numerous public meetings and has worked with farmers, consumers, and the organic community to arrive at national standards which uphold traditional organic practices and values.

The good news is that the USDA's rules are not final. The agency has asked for comments from the public and we have until **April 30, 1998** to respond. This public comment work sheet allows you to make a direct comment to the USDA on its proposed rule. Read each issue carefully. We have often contrasted the **USDA** proposed rule with the original **NOSB** recommendation. After considering each provision let the agency know what you think. After you have made your comments, make sure to complete the name and address section below. Then fold the form along the dotted line, and mail it to the address provided on the back. Or, you can fax your comments to the USDA at (202) 690-4632. Please also make sure that copies are sent to your members of Congress. If you run out of space on this worksheet, feel free to attach additional pages. If you should have any additional questions, Organic Watch can be reached C/O ICTA, 310 D St. NE, Washington D.C. 20002, phone (202) 547-9359, fax (202) 547-9429, e-mail [owatch@icta.org](mailto:owatch@icta.org).

Please Fill In the Following Information About You:

Name:	_____		
Street:	_____		
City:	State:	Zip Code:	
Phone: (H)	(W)	(Fax)	
E-Mail:	_____		
Please describe your interest in organic foods: _____			
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Please Make As Many Copies of This Form as Necessary and Distribute Widely